

BRIEF SUMMARY FOR STUDY OF ANGELS
by Willis E. Bishop

1. Angels were created sometime between day one and day four of the creation week.
2. Each angel is a direct individual creation. Angels do not die - nor marry - nor propagate a race.
3. Angels went through a period of testing. Some remained faithful and followed the Lord. Others followed Satan. Christ's work of salvation does not extend to them.
4. Angels have many remarkable physical characteristics; e.g., great strength, incredible swiftness, etc.
5. Angels have real bodies, the nature of which we are completely ignorant.
6. Angels are not babies who died, nor glorified human spirits, and they do not have wings.
7. Cherubim and seraphim are separate classes of beings - not angels.
8. Angels are very great in number and are well organized.
9. Angels have various ministries for the Lord, including guardianship over believers and eventually leading them to Paradise.
10. Angels are not to be worshipped.
11. Our Lord appears in the Old Testament in the wonderful character of "The Angel of the Lord."
12. "The Angel of the Lord" does not appear in the New Testament.

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Notes for Study on
SOME THINGS ABOUT ANGELS
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September 1996

This study includes information drawn from a number of sources without direct credit given, as well as my own research. (See partial bibliography at the end of these notes.) Much emphasis has been placed on statements of Scripture. Please search the Scripture (cp. Acts 17:11) to find out whether our conclusions are correct. Let us admit that we are dealing with a subject of a largely unseen realm and we want to proceed with prayerful caution.

Question: Is man the only creation in God's vast multiverse? The Bible answers, "No."

I. The Existence of Angels

- (a) In the Scripture the existence of angels is simply assumed.
- (b) The word "angel" occurs about 292 times in the Bible.
- (c) Our Lord never questioned the existence of angels. He often taught concerning them - e.g., Matt. 26:53, at the time of His arrest in the Garden: "Or do you not think that I am able to call upon My Father, and He will place beside Me more than twelve legions of angels?"

II. The Origin of Angels

- There is no full Biblical account of the creation of angels.
- (a) Angels are created beings.
 - Read Psalm 148:2-5
 - all the angels at the same time
 - cp. Psalm 33:6-9, "He spoke and it was done."
 - angels have no reproductive capability [see (c) below]
- (b) Angels were created by Christ.
 - Col. 1:16, "by Him (i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ) all things were created." cp. John 1:1-3
- (c) Each angel was a direct individual creation.
 - Read Matt. 22:23-30
 - since angels do not marry:
 - they do not exist in families
 - they are not a race as human beings are - i.e., do not propagate
 - they are a class of beings separate from man
- (d) The time of their creation.
 - some say before the world was created
 - some say after the creation of Adam and Eve

Creation days - Gen. 1:

1. light
2. expansion
3. land and vegetation
4. lights (sun; moon; stars)
5. air and water
- animals
6. land animals and man

Two Scripture references fix the time more accurately:

Ex. 20:11, "for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them [emphasis mine]. And He rested on the seventh day."

Conclusion: Angels were created within the six days.

Read Job 38:4-7, especially verse 7. God asks re things relating to creation: morning stars, such as Venus and Mercury; sons of God; angels

From "The Antiquity of Music," by Harry Rimmer:

"... The first time music was made is recorded in the thirty-eighth chapter of Job. ... God asked Job forty-eight questions of a scientific nature, none of which the prophet could answer and very few of which we can answer now, four thousand years later. ... God has been asking Job a series of questions about the mathematics of creation....

"Melody is pure mathematics, and so is color. I mean that basically, in the "stuff" or "material" of which they are composed, sound and light are identical.... Some of it moves so fast the eye cannot see it, so we call it 'ultra-violet light'. other impulses of the same matter move too slowly for the eye to apprehend, and we call it 'infra-red light'. Reduce the speed and lengthen the wave length of these infra-red 'waves' to a sufficient degree, and they strike the ear as sound. It is purely a matter of mathematics.

"Some ears are tuned to catch waves shorter or longer than others--thus police dogs can be guided by a whistle that is inaudible to the burglar's ears, and bats can receive radar waves and sounds dogs cannot hear....

"Our eyes can see but a minute part of the entire spectrum of light. Sound ... begins with a slow vibration visible to the eye. As it increases in speed of vibration, it passes successively through various forms--visible movement, sound, heat, invisible infra-red waves, visible light, invisible ultra-violet waves, radio, and a host of higher frequencies of which as yet we know but little.

"... By means of photo-electric devices [an] ingenious machine [called an "auroratone"] changes color to sound and sound to color.... We certainly live in a strange day, when we can see melody and hear color! ... All discord is caused by man, apparently, and we can blend any light frequency into harmony as it originates from its source.

"Apparently the ears of angels can apprehend the higher frequencies of color rays, so when the stars were created and their light leaped out into space, the angels of God shouted for joy when they heard this matchless paean of praise at creation."

Read Gen. 1:14-19 - the stars were created on the fourth day.

Conclusion: Since the angels were present when the stars were created, they must have been created between the first and fourth days of creation.

(e) Their spiritual relation to God.

Gen. 1:31 - at the end of the six days of creation it is said, "And God saw everything that He had made and behold it was very good."

Conclusion: There was at that point no sin in the universe-- and the angels were in a state of innocence. (God is not the "author of sin" and therefore the angels were created without sin.)

Their salvation appears to be this:

1. God supplied a testing period (a state of probation - (cp. Adam and Eve)
2. Their obedience or disobedience determined their future destiny.
3. Those that did sin lost their state of innocence - (fixed evil character) - see Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4-6
-- The time of their fall would have been after the seventh day of creation and before the fall of Adam and Eve (and before any children born to them) - there is no definite information on the period of time.
4. Those who did not sin have become "unable to sin" - (fixed good character)
cp. believers after death - our state of probation is this life; no second chance after this life
Matt. 18:10 - "angels always see the face of My Father"
Matt. 25:31 - "all the holy angels"
5. Christ's work of salvation does not extend to the angels!
Heb. 2:16 - "He [i.e., Christ] does not take hold of [i.e., give help to] angels, but He does take hold of the seed of Abraham [in the spiritual sense - Gal. 3:29]
--for this reason in all respects He was obligated to become similar [i.e., a human body but without

sin] to His brethren ... in order to make propitiation [i.e., atonement by dying] for the sins of the people...."

1 Pet. 1:12 - "things ... the gospel ... things which angels desire [a strong desire] to look into."

Note the wonderful grace of the Lord to provide salvation for us humans!

(f) The evil angels are now found in two groups.
(they sinned without a remedy - no atonement)

1. One group is confined to Tartarus (Greek) -
(KJV - hell) - 2 Pet. 2:4

Some understand this as spiritual confinement, but with the place of confinement named, real confinement is intended.

The nature of their sin is not specified.

2. The other evil angels are free to follow Satan -
Matt. 25:41, "the devil and his angels"
Rev. 12:9, "Satan ... and his angels"

Discussion in class:

Evil angels in hell (Mark 9:42-47) - Greek is Gehenna.
Sacrifice of children to Baal took place in the Hinnon Valley, which became the city dump.

In Luke 16:23 - Greek is Hades.

2 Peter 2:4 - Greek is Tartarus. Greeks located it below Hades.

Re demons: Scripture never refers to demons as fallen angels, nor to fallen angels as demons. Origin of demons is not given in the Scripture.

III. The Basic Words Used to Describe Angels

- (a) The Hebrew word in the Old Testament is "malak" -
"messenger" or "angel."
-- used of people - e.g., Gen. 32:3, "and Jacob sent messengers ... to Esau"
-- used many times of angels - e.g., Gen. 28:12, "and Jacob dreamed and behold a ladder ... and ... the angels of God were ascending and descending..."
- (b) The Greek word in the New Testament is "angelos."
-- used of people - e.g., Luke 7:24, "the messenger of John [the Baptist]"
-- used many times of angels - e.g., Luke 1:11, "and an angel of the Lord appeared"

A primary duty of angels appears to be that of a messenger -
(more later under their occupation).

IV. Some Physical Capabilities of Angels

- (a) They are great in strength (superhuman strength), but not omnipotent. E.g., Psalm 103:20, "Bless the LORD, you His angels. Mighty of strength, who perform His word...." Matt. 28:1, 2, "Now after the Sabbaths [plural in Greek], as the first day of the week began to dawn ... there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone (it was very large, Mk. 16:4) from the door and sat on it."

Note: A wheel of granite 6 to 8 feet in diameter and 1 foot thick -- would weigh more than 8,000 lbs. (4 tons).

- (b) They can move with incredible swiftness. E.g., Dan. 9:21; Matt. 26:53, "or do you not think that I am able to call upon My Father and He will place beside Me more than twelve legions of angels?"
- (c) On occasion they exercise supernatural power. (Read Acts 12:5-11 (a release of Peter from prison).
- (d) They may inflict physical evil upon men.
(See Acts 12:20-23.)
- (e) They have the ability to appear suddenly.
(Read Lk. 2:8-15.)
-- they may appear in dreams (Joseph - Matt. 1:20); visibly as a man (Mk. 16:5 at the open tomb); as a man whose body and garments were brilliant and dazzling (Dan. 10:5, 6).
- (f) Certain angels have control over certain elements of nature.
E.g., Rev. 7:1 - "holding the four winds of the earth"
Rev. 14:18 - "who had authority over the fire"
Rev. 16:4 - "the rivers and ... springs of waters"

V. What Kind of Body - if any - do Angels Have?

This question has been debated for centuries. We therefore carefully suggest the following:

- (a) Angels are ministering spirits.
Heb. 1:6-14, "Are they not all ministering spirits...."

Definition of spirit: "An independent being in contrast to a being that can normally be perceived by the physical senses." (Arndt & Gingrich lexicon)

- (b) Our Lord distinguished between "spirit" and His resurrection body. Read Luke 24:33-43.

Therefore, the bodies of angels could not be "flesh and bone" as our bodies, or even as our glorified bodies.

For this reason many believe that angels are a class of beings without bodies.

-- they compare this to the human soul and spirit immediately after death - Gen. 35:18, "And it came to pass as her soul was departing [i.e., from the body] for she died...." Rachael at the birth of Benjamin. James 2:26, "as the body without the spirit is dead...."

But to me - the Bible teaches an intermediate body for the believer between death and resurrection. Read 2 Cor. 5:1-4; Matt. 17:3 - Moses had a "body" on the Mount of Transfiguration even though he was buried in the land of Moab (Deut. 34:6) about 1,400 years before. Luke 16 - Lazarus and rich man. Rich man saw Lazarus. Rev. 6:9 - "I saw under the altar the souls" "Soul" is often used of the whole person.

If this is correct, then the argument for angels without bodies is not valid.

(c) Since angels have been seen from time to time, there are two possibilities in relation to their bodies.

1. A temporary "embodiment" - and subsequent disembodiment. This would require constant "in" and "out" action, and this is possible. Certainly some of their appearances were more than just visions.
2. Angels have bodies (real ones) which are of a nature about which we are completely ignorant. This is not surprising when we are dealing with the "unseen" world. Read 2 Cor. 12:1-4 - Paul was either unable to or not permitted to speak about what he saw. John 11 - there is not a word from Lazarus concerning his four-day experience.

Read also: 1 Cor 15:40 - there are "heavenly" bodies. Some believe these are stars, but I do not believe they are. Phil. 2:10 - there are "heavenly" beings - ("beings" because they confess, vs. 11) All this leads me to believe that angels have unique bodies (see #2 above).

Again, please search the Scripture for yourself - Acts 17:11!

3. Angels are normally invisible to the human eye, but on occasion are seen. Compare many Bible accounts of visible appearances to humans.

2 Kings 6:17 - angels are not mentioned in the account but intended also? Horses and chariots need someone to direct?

- (d) Some "scholars" of the Middle Ages sometimes got involved in strange questions about the bodies of angels. E.g., how many angels could stand on the point of a needle? - (problem of space). Or, can an angel be in two places at the same time? - (problem of time). Or, whether guardian angels have charge of children from baptism, from birth, or while the infant is still in the womb of the mother.
- (e) Angels are always spoken of in the masculine gender and visibly appear as men. E.g., Dan. 9:21, "the man Gabriel"; Luke 1:26, "the angel Gabriel." (See II(c) for related information.)

-- the few named in Scripture are men: Gabriel (Dan. 9:21); Michael (Jude 9); and Abaddon (Rev. 9:11)

-- some suggest the two women of Zech. 5:9
- but they are not called angels - contrast verse 5
- more likely they are symbols of demonic forces that seek to protect "wickedness" and enshrine her in Babylon - verses 8 and 11 (More at VI(d))

VI. Some Mistaken Ideas About Angels

- (a) Angels are not babies who died - they are always presented in Scripture as adults. There is no scriptural basis that a baby who dies becomes an angel.
- (b) Angels are not glorified human spirits - Scripture presents a redeemed human spirit as retaining its individual identity as known before death. E.g., Lazarus in Luke 16:19 ff; Moses and Elijah in Matt. 17:1-ff (Mount of Transfiguration).

-- The resurrection body (1 Cor. 15) preserves the individual person.

- (c) Some say angels do not sing - but I think they do!

-- Possible inferences from terminology:

Ex. 15:1, "Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying, I will sing to the LORD...."

Rev. 5:8, 9, "the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders ... sang a new song, saying"

Rev. 15:2, 3 (the Tribulation saints) sang ... saying..."

Zeph. 3:17, "The LORD your God ... will rejoice over you with singing." Even God sings!!

Luke 2:13, "a multitude of the heavenly host [angels, vs. 15] praising God and saying...." (in poetry).

[Emphasis mine in all references.]

Is it too much to infer "singing" from the above illustrations? You decide.

An inference from my grandmother's dying remarks (heard by my mother and father): "Fermin [an infant son of hers who had died many years before], don't you hear the angels sing?"

- (d) Angels do not have wings - contrary to much in art such as tapestries at Ringling display in Sarasota (Gabriel in full size with large wings as he appeared to Mary). Also babies (in various pictures) with wings.

In Scripture when angels appear in visible form they are without wings or halos (like men). E.g., Heb. 13:1, "do not forget hospitality - for in doing this some have unknowingly entertained angels." This is not possible if wings and halos were present. They were so humanlike in appearance as not to be distinguished from humans!

See Lk. 24:4, "two men" (angels, John 20:12) at Jesus' tomb. Mk. 16:5 - described as a young man. Rev. 21:17 - implies that angels are about the same size as a man. Compare Deut. 3:11.

Problem: Certain passages imply that angels have wings - e.g., Dan. 9:21 - Gabriel "being caused to fly swiftly." Rev. 14:6, "and I saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven"

Webster's Dictionary: fly - (6th definition) - "to hit a fly in baseball" - (#3 definition) - "to move or pass swiftly."

Note: The women in Zech. 5:9 have wings, and they are not angels. (See V(e).)

- VII. Cherubim and Seraphim are Separate Classes of Beings - not angels (my opinion). They are separate orders of God's creation.

Read Rev. 5:11, "And I looked and I heard a voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures (i.e., cherubim) and the elders...." (Emphasis mine.) Living creatures are cherubim - Ezek. 10.

- (a) Cherubim - mentioned almost one hundred times in Scripture. Many times they appear depicted on the furniture or curtains of the tabernacle and temple. E.g., Ex. 25:17-20, on the mercy seat (Heb. 9:5); 1 Kings 6:23-28, two large ones in the inner sanctuary (temple); 1 Kings 6:29, carved on the walls (temple).

They are sometimes called living creatures - Ezek. 1:5, with Ezek. 10:20. Evidently there are different orders of cherubim - Ezek. 1:5-10, four wings and four faces each; Rev. 4:7-8, six wings each and a face each.

Some of their duties: Gen. 3:24 - guardians to the Garden of Eden and the way to the tree of life; Ezek. 1 - formed the LORD's chariot to carry His throne; Rev. 6:1, 3, 5, 7 - dispersed the first four-seal judgments.

Note: Satan is a cherub - not an angel. Ezek. 28:14: "You were the anointed cherub that covers."

2 Cor. 11:14, "and no wonder! For Satan himself transforms (NKJV) (disguises, NASB) (masquerades, NIV) himself into an angel of light."

Rev. 12:3, 4, "a great fiery dragon (i.e., Satan, vs. 9) ... his tail". "Dragon" and "tail" must be figures of speech - not literal. Cp. "having seven heads and ten horns."

The history of Satan: Originally in heaven, "the holy mountain of God," Ezek. 28:13, 14 - "in the Garden of God," "in the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub." He sinned through pride, 1 Tim. 3:6 and Ezek. 28:17. He was expelled from heaven, Luke 10:18, "I saw Satan fall as lightning out of heaven." He is now the "ruler of the domain of the air," Eph. 2:2 - Eph. 6:12, active in "heavenly places," i.e., lower heavens.

During the Tribulation period he will be cast to the Earth, Rev. 12:9. He will be put in the abyss for a thousand years, Rev. 20:1-3. He will then be released for "a little season," Rev. 20:3b, 7. He will finally be put into the Lake of Fire, Rev. 20:10. See Matt. 25:41, "into the everlasting fire, having been prepared for the devil and his angels." He is never put into Hades (Hell, KJV)!

Note: Isaiah 14 is often used to teach concerning Satan. But Isaiah 13 deals with the burden against Babylon, where the people of Israel were captives. Chapter 14 is still dealing with Babylon - against the king of Babylon.

The only place in Scripture where Lucifer is mentioned is in Isaiah 14:12 and following. That is not a reference to Satan. Verse 16, "... Is this the man...." Satan is not a man.

Question re Satan cast out of Heaven and his access to God, i.e., his appearance before the Lord in Job.

Answer: Satan is responsible for reporting to the Lord, but I believe his appearance in Job was not in God's Heaven. The "sons of God who presented themselves before the Lord" was an assembly of believers, much as we gather in church. God has more than one place in which He sits for activities and judgment. Cp. Rev. 4, "a throne set in the heavens."

(b) Seraphim

Is. 6:1-7 - the only appearance in Scripture - six wings (vs. 2), one face (vs. 2). We are not told how many there are - vs. 6, "one from the Seraphim"

Their ministry seems to be: proclaiming the moral character of God, "holy" (vs. 3); showing in a symbolic way the atoning work of the LORD, "your iniquity is taken away and your sin is covered" (vs. 7b).

Important: The creatures of the heavenly realm - angels, cherubim and Seraphim - all teach us reverence (sadly lacking today!).

Question: Who are the "watchers" of Daniel 4?

1. a separate class of beings? Dan. 4:13, 14, 23 - "a watcher - a holy one" - one individual - they have authority - under the Most High.
2. a description of one activity of angels?
Angels are invisible, silent witnesses of the conduct of believers.

See 1 Cor. 11:10; 1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:21; Luke 15:10; Dan. 4:13, 17, 23 (how do we understand vs. 17? - a council in Heaven? Cp. 1 Kings 22:19-24. Sarcasm, vs. 15, or 2 Sam. 24:1 with 1 Chron. 21:1).

Action attributed directly to God, which He allows - Zech. 1:10, 11.

VIII. Some Characteristics of Angels

(a) They have emotions. See Luke 15:10, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

(b) They have great intelligence (but are not omniscient).
-- they have lived a long time (no need to study history - they have lived it)
-- they no doubt have been many places
-- 2 Sam. 14:20 - the wise woman of Tekoa to King David - "My lord (i.e., David) is wise according to the wisdom of an angel of God to know every-

thing that is in the land." Mark 13:32 - "but concerning that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (The knowledge of angels is superior to man, but limited.)

Clarify the omniscience of Jesus - Acts 1:6-8.

(c) They apparently have their own languages.

1 Cor. 13:1, "though I speak with the languages of men and of angels, but have not love"

They also speak in any language of man to whom they appear.

IX. The Number and Organization of Angels

(a) Their number. Since angels do not marry nor die (Luke 20:36) their number neither increases nor decreases.

Rev. 5:11 - "myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands" (each of the four words in the plural) - (angels, living creatures and elders). "Myriad" - a very large number not exactly defined. If "myriad" stands for ten thousand, then it is ten thousand times ten thousand - which equals one hundred million and "thousands of thousands"!

Heb. 12:22 - myriads (literally) of angels.

Dan. 7:10 (literally) "a thousand thousands served Him - a myriad myriads stood before Him." (i.e., angels and ??")

Cp. the title: LORD of Sabaoth - Rom. 9:29; James 5:4
LORD of hosts - 1 Sam. 1:3
This title includes angels, e.g. Luke 2:13 (the heavenly host at Christ's birth)

Conclusion: We do not know the exact number of holy angels.

(b) Their organization.

1. Three angels are named: Michael (5 times) - Dan. 12:1, "prince of Israel"; Dan. 10:13, "one of the chief princes." Gabriel (4 times) - Lk. 1:19. Abaddon (Apollyon) (1 time) - Rev. 9:11.

The Apocryphal books name five others, but that record is certainly not inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16) and is not dependable. E.g., the Book of Tobit.

2. Michael is called the archangel in Jude 9. The only other mention of an archangel is in 1 Thess. 4:16, (lit.) "a voice of an archangel." Is this Michael or another archangel? We do not have information on this.

In Dan. 10:13 Michael is called one of the chief princes. Dan. 10:21 - he is "your [Israel's] prince. Jude 8, 9 - indicates that Satan, although fallen, is higher in rank than even the archangel.

Note: All the items of number 2 above indicate rank and organization among the angels.

3. Further organization is suggested by Matt. 26:53, "twelve legions of angels." "Legion" suggests the organization of the Roman army when in full strength numbering about six thousand. The word may on occasion mean "very many." See Mark 5:1-20, especially verses 9 and 15.

"The armies in heaven" phrase in Rev. 19:14 would suggest organization as well. Of whom?

saints? - Rev. 19:8; Jude 14:15; Rev. 17:14
angels? - Matt. 25:31

Observation: "God is not a God of confusion (disorder), 1 Cor. 14:33. We would therefore expect that not only the multiverse which He has created would work in perfect harmony, and it does, but also that untold thousands of His creatures would be perfectly organized, and they are!

4. In Eph. 3:10, the words "principalities" [rulers] and "powers" [authorities] "in heavenly places" [realms] [therefore not humans] imply to me that good angels have some ranks or distinctions in heaven that are not made clear to us.

Note: Eph. 6:23 - a similar arrangement among evil forces.

Observation: The expression "in the heavenly realms" in Eph. 6:12 cannot mean God's heaven (Eph. 2:2) as a sphere of activity for evil angels. Therefore, the same expression in Eph. 3:10 could indicate that good angels operate also in that same realm as well as in heaven itself - Matt. 18:10; Matt. 24:36; Luke 22:43.

X. Some of the Occupations of Angels

- (a) Some angels have ministries in connection with the temple in heaven.

1. Moses built the tabernacle in the wilderness after the pattern of the temple in heaven.

Ex. 25:9, "[the LORD spoke to Moses] according to all that I will show you, [that is] the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it."

(1 Chron. 28:11, 12, Solomon's temple - shown by the Spirit to David - was built after the same basic tabernacle pattern - with additional instructions given by the Lord to David.)

Heb. 8:5, "who [priests in Paul's day] serve [Paul's present time] a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things just as Moses was divinely warned when he was about to complete the tabernacle." The temple was still in use until 70 A.D. - the Roman destruction.

Heb. 8:2, "[Christ] a minister of the holy things and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected and not man...."

not man, i.e., Moses

the Lord erected, i.e., not eternal in the past

(Since it is related to man's redemption, it was possibly erected as the plans for man's salvation were completed by the Triune God.)

- (b) In the book of Revelation there are twelve mentions of this temple in heaven - and some references mention the ministry of angels in connection with it.

Rev. 11:1 - the altar (golden altar of incense)

Rev. 11:2 - the outer court

Rev. 11:19 - the Ark of the Covenant (In the invasion by Babylon in 586 the Ark disappeared and was never seen again.)

Rev. 14:15, 17 - "another angel came out of the temple"

Rev. 15:6 - "out of the temple came seven angels having the seven plagues...."

But, in Rev. 21:22 - no [literal] temple in the "New Jerusalem" Why?

"the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple"

- (c) Some ministries in relation to God:

-- they praise God - Ps. 148:2a, "praise Him all His angels"

-- they worship God - Ps. 29:2b, "worship the LORD in the majesty of holiness"

-- they rejoice in the work of God - Job 38:7, "when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy"

-- they serve God - Ps. 103:20, "you His angels... who perform His word"

-- they aided in giving the law on Mount Sinai, Acts 7:38, "This is he [Moses] who was in the

assembly [church] in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai....";

Acts 7:53, "you who have received the law by the direction of angels;

Gal. 3:19, "Why then the Law? It was added ... being administered [directed] through angels by the hand of a mediator [i.e., Moses]";

Heb. 2:2, "for if the word which was spoken through angels was sure...."

Addendum: Ex. 31:18, "He [God] gave to Moses two tablets of stone written by the finger of God...."
Cp. Luke 11:20, "but if I cast out demons by the finger of God..." with Matt. 12:28, "but if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God...." (emphasis mine).

Observation: Even in the giving of the Law we have an illustration of Scripture inspired by the Holy Spirit. See 2 Tim 3:16; Matt. 5:18; 2 Pet. 1:19-21.

(d) Some ministries in relation to Jesus Christ.

There were four hundred silent years of revelation from God from Malachi to the opening of the New Testament - then:

Luke 1:11 - an angel appeared to Zacharias
Matt. 1:21 - " " " to Joseph
Luke 1:26 - " " " to Mary
Luke 2:10 - " " " to the
shepherds

Matt. 2:13 - an angel warned Joseph to flee to Egypt

Matt. 4:11 - " " ministered to Jesus after His temptation
Luke 22:43 - " " strengthened Jesus in Gethsemane

Matt. 26:53 - 12 legions ready to defend Him

Matt. 28:2 - rolled the stone from the tomb (to let folks in!)

Matt. 28:6 - announced His resurrection to some women

John 20:12 - met Mary Magdalene at the tomb

Acts 1:10, 11 - attended His ascension (2 men)

(Read Psalm 68:17, 18 - a great company of angels in attendance)

I Thess. 4:16 - the archangel at the rapture

Acts 1:11 - predict His second coming

Matt. 25:31 - attend His second coming

Matt. 24:31 - regather the elect (Israel) at His second coming

Matt. 13:39-43 - as reapers, prepare the world for His kingdom

Rev. 5:11, 12 - worship Him in heaven

Note: As Creator, Christ is above the angels (Col. 1:16); in His incarnation He was made a little (while or less?) than the angels (Heb. 2:9) - but now, 1 Peter 3:22!

(e) Some ministries in relation to believers.

The Hebrew word for angels, or messengers ["malak"], appears over 200 times in the Old Testament (many times in reference to angels).

The Greek word for angels, or messengers, ["angelos"] occurs about 180 times - only 13 times in Romans through Titus and about 70 times in Revelation.

This seems to indicate that during the present age angels are usually not appearing visibly as they did in previous times (Genesis through Acts). 2 Cor. 5:7: "for we walk by faith, not by sight." (Cp. scarcity of public miracles today).

The verses in Romans through Titus do indicate however that they are active; and Revelation indicates a great increase in visible activity in the future - as the coming of the Lord draws near.

1. They minister to believers - Heb. 1:14: "are they not all ministering spirits sent forth for service for the sake of those who are about to inherit salvation [i.e., the future aspect of salvation]?"

Question: How do they minister (i.e., to believers)?

- (a) Since they watch us (see section VII under question of "watchers"), it should make us conscious of our responsibility to the Lord.
- (b) Since they do not "understand" our salvation (see II (e) 5), they may not be able to aid us much in our Bible study or spiritual growth. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.
- (c) Their ministry is therefore largely in the realm of physical things. Psalm 91:11: "For He shall give His angels charge over you [singular] to keep you in all your ways."

Here is a general principle given to one who trusts in God. (Satan used it [Psalm 91:11] to tempt Jesus - Luke 4:10, 11.) This, then, speaks of angel guardian activity.

Note: Scripture does not teach that a believer has a special guardian angel, contrary to The Talmud which says that "two angels accompany a man through life."

Cp. Matt. 18:10: "take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in the heavens their angels always see the face of My Father in the heavens." Some understand "little ones" to refer to believers. Others see in the context a reference to children (vss. 2, 3). In either case guardian angels are indicated.

- (d) Since they do not now usually appear visibly, there are no doubt occasions in our lives when they minister on our behalf without our knowledge. (Could this be a part of the interesting ages of the future to hear angels recount to us just such things?)
- (e) On occasion an angel may visibly minister to us. In such a case, let us prayerfully, carefully, soberly deal with such an incident.

There are dangers here!

1. Do not let such an incident take the place of God and His Word in our lives.
2. Do not pray to angels - Matt. 6:6, "pray to your Father...."

P.S. I shudder at some reports I read and hear from people who claim such appearances.

Question: How should we evaluate such reports by others?

1. The event may really have happened.
 - use your Bible and common sense
 - consider the trustworthiness of the source of the account
2. One may have been mistaken; e.g., a "Good Samaritan" does a good deed and then disappears, not wanting recognition.
3. One may have had an imaginary perception due to a physical or emotional condition.
4. A person may be lying, especially to deliver some religious message to us.
5. A person may be having false memories. This has often been demonstrated; e.g., sexual abuse; abduction by aliens; even by suggestion by someone else.
6. A tendency to exaggerate an experience.
7. Beware of encounters that involve visions, voices and teaching of angels.

Question: If there is such a thing as guardian angels, what about Christians who are being killed in certain countries today or who die in an accident, etc., etc.?

Some answers:

1. God's sovereignty in each life is best. Ps. 138:8, "The LORD will perfect that which concerns me."
2. God never makes a mistake! Deut. 30:4, "His work is perfect."
3. God's ways are "past finding out." Rom. 11:33, "His ways are untraceable."

Some instances could be a case of: 1 Cor. 11:30, "unworthy manner...many sleep"; 1 John 5:16, "sin leading to death." We cannot judge.

How do we know angels were not involved?

Ryrie records an inscription he once saw in an old church in Scotland: "Though God's power be sufficient to govern us, yet for man's infirmity He appointed His angels to watch over us."

(f) A wonderful ministry of angels is found in Luke 16:19 ff. Read it. Regarding the death of a Christian: Happy is the man who has learned to hold things of this world with a loose hand. It is not courage that gives a Christian a calm assurance in the face of death. It is knowledge.

(g) Some ministries of angels in relation to nations.

Dan. 10:13 - they withstand evil angels of nations

Dan. 12:1 - they (he) guards Israel

Dan. 4:17 - they have a council in re rulers

Matt. 24:31 - they will gather Israel after the second coming of Christ

(h) Miscellaneous observations.

1. Angels are fellow servants with believers in serving God - Rev. 22:9, "I am your fellow servant." Note again: Believers are not told to pray to them or seek their assistance.
2. Angels are not to be worshipped by believers - Rev. 22: 8, 9, "I fell down to worship

before the feet of the angel ... and he said [to me], 'See [that you do] not [do that]'.
Col. 2:18, "let no one decide against you ... in worship of angels."

3. Angels are lower than man in their work and final destiny or reward. Heb. 1:14 - ministering to believers; 1 Cor. 6:3 - "do you not know that we shall judge angels?" - (are these good angels or evil angels?).

If good angels: we have no further information; if evil angels: Isaiah 24:21-23:

I make these suggestions:

- vs. 21 - "in that day" - when the LORD reigns in Jerusalem - vs. 23
- vs. 21 - "the host" to be "punished" - Satan's hosts - Eph. 6:12
- vs. 22 - they "will be shut up" - cp. Rev. 20:1-3 - Satan bound for 1,000 years
- vs. 22 - they will be "visited" or "released" - cp. Rev. 20:3 - "released for a little time"; then Matt. 25:41 - "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Cp. Rev. 20:10 - "the devil was cast into the lake of fire"

Somewhere along the way believers will have a part in this awesome judgment!

XI. An Interesting Possibility

Read and discuss Gen. 18:1-19:29

Exhibits of the triune God: at the baptism of Christ; Rev. 4:2 - John caught up to heaven - the one on the throne identified as the Father and the Lamb as Christ. Fits with Gen. 18 - temporary manifestation of God: three men, "my Lord" singular; alternate of singular and plural; two left yet Abraham stands before the Lord. In Gen. 19:1 two angels came to Sodom, verse 20, "and he" - two speak as one. This may have been a temporary manifestation of the Trinity in the form of angels.

XII. Who Were the Sons of God in Genesis 6? Gen. 6:1-6

Many say they were fallen angels. I like better the suggestion that the Sons of God were men of the human race.

1. The Genesis account calls them men - not angels.
vss. 3, 5, 6, 7 - vs. 3 - "he is flesh"
2. The New Testament account indicates they were men - not angels.

- (a) Gen. 6:2, "took them wives" - indicates marriage, not promiscuous relations.
 - (b) Lk. 17:26, 27, "and just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man ... they were eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage until the day Noah entered into the ark and the flood destroyed them all" - the ordinary affairs of life.
 - (c) Cp. Matt. 22:30, "for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven." Apparently angels have no capability of reproduction.
3. The exceeding sinfulness of "all flesh" cannot be explained if only the daughters are human. Gen. 6:12, "all flesh had corrupted their way." Cp. 1 Peter 3:20, 21, (only) eight persons had a "good conscience toward God."
4. The word "giants" in Gen. 6:4 raises some problems.
- they were not the result of the marriage.
Time note: "in these days" and "also afterward" (i.e., later) when the sons of God "from the [remote] past" (KJV "old").
 - they were giants in what? - status? wickedness? military power? stature?
 - the Hebrew word translated "giants" is "Nephilim" (several Bible translations use that word in 6:4). "Actually, the translation 'giants' is supported mainly by the LXX and may be quite misleading. The word may be of unknown origin and may mean 'heroes' or 'fierce warriors', etc. The RSV and NIV (also NASB) literal transliteration "Nephilim" is safer and may be correct in referring the noun to a race or nation."
- (Reading from Theological Workbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, pg. 587.)
- the only other place the word is found is in Numb. 13:32, 33, and there is no intent to infer relationship between angels and human women! (though indeed these were giants in size).
 - in any case, the word "giants" does not solve the question of identifying the Sons of God.
5. Mere indwelling of a human being by an angel (if that were possible!) (cp. demon indwelling) would not render that angel himself capable of physical sensation and

reproduction. And the Scripture does not include such a possibility. See Gen. 6:2, "the sons of God saw the daughters" - indicates a fleshly desire and they took them as wives.

6. The judgment of God was against men - not angels. Gen. 6:7, "I will destroy man ... from the face of the earth." Nothing is said about angels being judged.
7. In terms then of human beings - the sons of God must have descended from formerly godly ancestors. Read Gen. 4:26.

Illustration: The Pilgrims and others as first settlers in America were Christian. The early purposes and principles of this country earned for us the title of a Christian Nation. Yet, as the years have gone by we are no longer a Christian Nation, for only a small percentage of us really know the Lord by grace through faith plus nothing. Just so, in Noah's day - Gen. 6:12, "all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth."

8. A look at Jude 6 - sometimes used for support of the angel view. Examples of rebellion and unbelief in verses 5, 6, and 7. No relationship between verses 6 and 7 - the sins are not the same.

XIII. Some Problem Passages in Regard to Angels

Reminder:

- the Scripture is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16) - every word fully inspired. (Cp. Matt. 5:18)
- the Scriptures were originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic (O.T.) and Greek (N.T.)
- sometimes our problem of understanding a passage comes from our translations (which are not inspired)

1. John 1:47-51. The angels ascending and descending a ladder from heaven in this passage do not refer to Gen. 28:11-13, nor are they to be understood spiritually, but will be fulfilled at a future time.

2. Ps. 8:5. "Angels" is a translation of the Hebrew word "Elohim." Elohim is used of the true God and also of false gods. How should it be translated in Ps. 8:5? Hebrews 2:6 quotes Ps. 8:5 and the Greek is clearly "angels." Therefore, "angels" is correct in Ps. 8:5. (In Ex. 22:8 Elohim is used of "judges," showing that the word is also used of other than "God.")

3. Ps. 78:25 - "angels food." The Hebrew for angels here is used in every other place as "mighty" or "noble," etc. Some translations, therefore, use "they ate the food of the mighty," i.e., fine food. In this context manna was fine food.

4. John 5:1-9 - "an angel stirred the water..."
Some insist this was an angel of God, but there are problems with that. E.g., why heal only the first one? Others suggest these words do not belong, but manuscript evidence says otherwise. Remnants of a heathen healing shrine have been found--a pool of the cults. The Lord visited that shrine to confront the pagan deity and heal the man. Verse 4, therefore, would refer to a pagan tradition.

SOME PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

1. To enlarge our sense of the greatness of God's realm.
2. To strengthen our faith in God's providential care.
 - (a) we are not alone - Heb. 1:14
 - (b) the nations are not out of "His control" - Dan. 10:13
 - (c) Satan and his angels will be cast into the lake of fire (not annihilated) prepared for them - Matt. 25:41
 - (d) the fallen angels in Tartarus will also be judged - 2 Peter 2:4
3. Adds amazement to our salvation by grace.
 - 1 Peter 1:12 - "the gospel ... which angels [strongly] desire to look into" [gain a clear glance].
 - Cp. John 20:5f "stooping down and looking."
4. A warning that, apart from Christ, punishment for sin is eternal - Rev. 20:10.

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What the Bible Says About Angels, by D. Jeremiah

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Quite a number of systematic theology books by various authors, etc.

Note: Material from the above sources is included in these Notes.